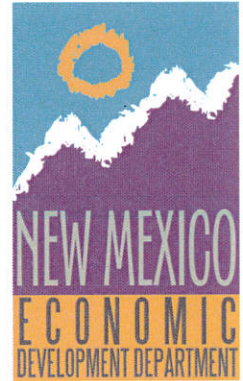


SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

JON BARELA
CABINET SECRETARY



December 28, 2015

Mr. Doug Haywood
Project Lead
United States Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Re: Copper Flat Mine

Dear Mr. Haywood,

I am writing to express the support of the New Mexico Economic Development Department for the Copper Flat Mine. I am pleased that the BLM has produced its draft Environmental Impact Statement, a significant milestone for the project. The Copper Flat Mine will be a huge economic driver for Sierra County and all of New Mexico. New Mexico Copper expects to generate 1,300 jobs during the construction phase and at least 250 permanent jobs once the mine begins operation. It is estimated that the State of New Mexico will generate \$53 million in revenue from New Mexico Copper, which will pay a total of in \$175 million in taxes over the life of the project. This is in addition to the enormous capital investment that New Mexico Copper has already made in the project. Successful operation of the Copper Flat Mine will demonstrate that investors can realize a return on such an investment, leading directly to additional investment and job creation throughout the state.

All of this will be done on an existing mine site, thereby limiting the environmental impact, and New Mexico Copper will not perform leaching or smelting on site, reducing the environmental impact even further. The new mine will be subject to the new Copper Rule, recently enacted by the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission. Those regulations are some of the most environmentally-protective rules for the copper mining industry in the country. The Copper Rule imposes stronger groundwater protections for new mining facilities and provides new reclamation criteria for closing a mine. This project will create jobs and generate wealth in an area of the state that desperately needs it, and do so in an environmentally responsible way.

The Economic Development Department strongly supports the project, and I urge the BLM to adopt Alternative 2, the most economical manner in which to operate the mine.

Sincerely,



Jon Barela
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Economic Development Department